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## Some of the Best

## Illinois High School Writing of 1946

Selected by CHARLES W. ROBERTS

University of Illinois

### FOREWORD

The compiler of this collection of student writing must admit that he has not been able to examine all of the best compositions produced in all Illinois high schools in the last year. He trusts that the selection he has made from the material submitted is representative of what is being done by the better students in schools throughout the state. It is his earnest hope that teachers and students will accept the challenge which this issue offers and will resolve now to be represented in next year's *Best Illinois High School Writing*. All contributions should be addressed to *Illinois English Bulletin*, 204a Lincoln Hall, Urbana, Illinois. Each manuscript should bear the name of the author, the name of his high school, and the name of his English teacher. No manuscripts will be returned unless they are accompanied by return postage.

Additional copies of this issue are available at ten cents a copy in orders of ten or more mailed to one address. Teachers and students of composition will find detailed discussion of the contents interesting and profitable.

C. W. R.

## SUMMER NIGHTS

It is a warm balmy night in July. I am sitting alone on our porch swing, gazing at the star-studded sky. Crickets are chirping incessantly, and I can hear a radio faintly playing down the street. I am remembering other summer nights just like this, and the fun I had playing in the yard with the other boys and girls in my block.

There were the evenings when all of us came together to play Chalk the Walk or Blind Man's Bluff, or to run around aimlessly in the yard, shouting to one another until someone's mother called him to come home. On other nights, there were contests to see who could catch the most fireflies which flew here and there among the shrubs. Sometimes when it was too hot to play games, we just sat in the yard near the streetlight and talked or sang songs. I recall the nights when the neighborhood gang came to my house, and everyone helped Dad make ice cream in the freezer. Then each begged to lick the delicious bits which still clung to the edges of the paddle.

I remember the time that everyone—but I am rudely awakened from my moments of reminiscing, when Mother calls, saying, "If you want the hem fixed in this formal before the dance, come in and I'll do it now."

Slowly I rise, silent and very thoughtful, still gazing at the sky and feeling pangs of regret, for I know that I am bidding farewell to those happy childhood pleasures of the past.

—ELEANOR SIFFERD, University High School, Urbana  
Dorothy Swindell, teacher

## MYSTERY, HERSELF

As her heavily made-up face encountered patrons entering the revolving doors, the cosmetic clerk looked with a critical stare. While I advanced toward the shelves of expensive perfumes and beauty aids, she seemed as unwilling to please as a meat dealer in time of scarcity. Gazing on what looked like a glass model, I saw nothing more than mysterious black eyes, sleek dark hair, and a very fitted black spangled dress. The display of cheap, artificial jewelry was blinding on the inky background. Her blood-purple fingernails clicked impatiently on the clear, scintillating counter as she slowly opened her generous, fuchsia mouth and sullenly asked, "Somethin' for ya?"

—ELEANOR CAPPI, Pekin High School  
Bernice Falkin, teacher

## HERE IN 1620

On December 21, 1620, the Pilgrims landed on the shore of Plymouth Harbor and stepped off onto a granite boulder which came to be known as Plymouth Rock. The Rock split in two when it was being raised to be consecrated to liberty in 1774, and by July 4, 1834, it rested in Pilgrim Hall. The year 1880 found it restored to its original position, and by 1921 a new granite canopy sheltered the famous Plymouth Rock. Here was where we found it in 1945.

Fortunately it was a beautiful summer day that we had chosen for our drive along the coast. Reaching our destination, we parked the car with the many others and approached the portico which stands over the Rock. Upon entering, we gazed over an iron fence to see the historic Plymouth Rock. There on the sand approximately ten feet below rested the boulder, unwashed by the waves of blue water for many, many years. The portico was not too large, and the famous rock looked crowded in its surroundings. In spite of the sunshine it was difficult to see it clearly. Engraved upon it was the date 1620.

Suddenly, as I stood there, I began to wonder if it really was the famed landmark. Having been moved and then returned — probably not to the exact spot where it originally lay — with the date inscribed upon it, Plymouth Rock had lost some of its glory. Of course the Pilgrims had not found the date inscribed upon it when they landed, and to me the monument began to appear man-made and artificial.

Looking a few yards to the right, I noticed several men adorned in the gray garb of the Pilgrims selling picture post cards and souvenirs. On all sides people were milling around proudly saying, "Now, we have seen Plymouth Rock."

Then I gazed out over Plymouth Harbor to the Atlantic beyond. Turning about-face, I viewed the green Massachusetts hills. Somehow the significance of the historical landing in 1620 and the beginning of a grand and great country lay not in the date-engraved boulder known as Plymouth Rock under its canopy of gray granite, but in the ever-rolling waters stretched to the horizon before me and in the ageless wooded hills in all their splendor behind me, under a canopy of blue, spacious skies.

— JANE WEBER, J. Sterling Morton High School, Cicero  
Mrs. Zada Templeton, teacher



## TUNE IN TOMORROW

"Good afternoon, ladies," drooled the announcer pleasantly. "It's time for another chapter in our joyful, true-to-life story of 'The Happy Life of Harvey.' First, we have a few words from our sponsor, the makers of Slappo Face Cream.

"Ladies, does your husband refuse to kiss you goodbye in the morning when he leaves for work? Do your children shy away from you? Have your friends been acting cool lately? If so, look in your mirror. Don't be disappointed. The makers of Slappo Face Cream can help you just as they've helped thousands of discouraged, desperate women. Just try the new 37-day Slappo plan. Each night before retiring, smear on a jar of Slappo, wipe gently away, and notice the difference. Surprising, isn't it? Well, use it for thirty-seven days, and you'll be even more surprised. Listen to this letter from a satisfied customer:

Dear Sirs:

I used Slappo for thirty-seven days as you advised me to do, and my husband and children hardly recognize me. In fact, nobody recognizes me anymore.

Yours truly,

Dorine Q. Nabisco

"Doesn't that prove what I've been trying to tell you? Ladies, go out and buy the large, economical size today.

"And, now for our story: today we find Harvey coming home from work. As he comes in, we hear Emma, his sweet wife, speak. Let's peep in on them, shall we?"

Emma: Harvey, why are you sneaking up the stairs?

Harvey: But, Emma dear, I'm not.

Emma: Don't lie to me, Harvey; I can't bear it. What's that in your hand?

Harvey (nervously): It's nothing, love, just —

Emma (sternly): You're trying to hide something from me. Come here, I want to see. Harvey, I said come here.

Harvey: Yes, love. (Walks over to her.)

Emma: Open that fist immediately. — Harvey, you're being difficult. *Open that* fist. What's this?

Harvey (meekly): A yo-yo.

Emma (surprised): A what?

Harvey: A yo-yo. You know, dear, one of those cute little toys that runs on a string.

Emma: So! this is the way you spend your allowance, on foolish trinkets.

Harvey: But, Emma dear, I —

Emma: Don't "dear" me. Oh, Harvey, you've made me get all excited, and I think I'm going to have one of my spells. Oh, dear, help me to that chair.

Harvey: Yes, love. (The door-bell rings.) I — I'll get it, dear.

Emma: You'll do nothing of the sort. I'll answer it myself.

Harvey: But, love, I don't think you —

Emma: Sit down. I'm perfectly able to answer it.

Harvey (sitting down): But, love, I — (organ music playing "Answer that door, Dear Katie.")

Announcer: Who will answer the door bell? If Emma does answer it, what will Harvey's next move be while he is alone in the kitchen? Will he dare take the yo-yo that is now lying open on the table, or will he refuse to take it because he knows Emma wouldn't like it. Poor Harvey is torn between his love for the yo-yo and his love for Emma. You won't want to miss tomorrow's gripping chapter of *The Happy Life of Harvey*. Here is a word from the sponsor.

—MARY ANN PATRICK, Pekin High School  
Bernice Falkin, teacher

### "QUAKE, QUAKE, QUAKE"

(With apologies to Tennyson)

Quake, quake, quake

In thy great high boots, O Me,  
And I hope that my hand can scribble  
The facts that toss in me.

All's well for the brilliant boy

That he laughs with his classmate gay;

All's well for the teacher glad

That she grins from her desk on this day.

When those testing sheets come forth

To my fingers never quite still,

O for a glance at a missing book

Or words from a wisdom mill.

Quake, quake, quake

During the seconds, O Me,

Yet the gladness closing this day of dread

Won't often return to me.

—RAE ERNSTER

Lyons Township High School, LaGrange  
Dorles Parshall, teacher

## FRANCE COMING BACK

"France will regain her position as a great power; she will not be relegated to the rank of a second-rate nation," asserted Roger London, French consul in Chicago, during a recent interview.

"She has regained her empire, the second largest in the world. She also has considerable prestige in both England and the United States because of similar interests with these nations. In addition to being the spiritual leader of such Latin American countries as Brazil and Argentina, France also has the good will of people throughout the world. However, probably the most important reason why France will recover her former position of prominence is that she is a permanent member of the United Nations security council and has the all-important veto power."

This tall, blond, handsome young man, who speaks flawless English, was born in Paris where he spent the first years of his life. After receiving his LL.B. degree from the University of Paris in 1934, he traveled through England and then went to Germany where he worked in a bank for several months. Because it is compulsory in France for men to serve in the army during their twentieth year, he was called back to his native land where he was inducted into the army.

After his release in 1935 he went to Australia to learn that part of the banking business which has to do with imports and shipping.

When the war broke out in 1939, although Mr. London was working for a French firm in Australia, he was ordered by his government to join the French forces in Indo-China.

In Indo-China, however, instead of becoming a soldier, Mr. London joined the diplomatic service as a consul. After serving in this capacity for nine months, he was transferred to Japan. Aware of this nation's plan to attack Indo-China, he aided in the French attempt to dissuade the Japanese warlords from following through with their conquest. Nevertheless, in August, 1940, the armies of Nippon attacked French Indo-China. Because he felt that he could be of no more use in Japan, and because the French consulate was then taking orders from the Vichy government, Mr. London flew to Australia.

In June, 1941, he became the general secretary for the Free French forces in Australia and was the spokesman for this organization in the South Pacific area. In September, 1943, after being head of the Fighting French Information and Propaganda service for six months, he went to Brazaville, Equatorial Africa, to join General DeGaulle's forces. He wanted to fight, but, because there was a shortage of trained workers, he became an assistant in the foreign broadcasting department. He worked there for eighteen months, writing scripts as well as broadcasting programs which were heard around the world. Mr. London explained that the broadcasts were made in French, English, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, and even German.



When France was liberated, Mr. London again applied for a position with the diplomatic service; he was sent to the Belgian Congo. In April, 1945, he was recalled to Paris where he was told that because of his splendid service to Free France, he could be stationed wherever he wished. He asked for a position as a consul in the United States and has been stationed in Chicago since last September.

When asked, "Do you think that France is right in insisting that the Ruhr be detached from Germany?" Mr. London replied without hesitation that this is necessary to keep peace throughout the world.

"A strong Germany is definitely a detriment to the security of not only France but of the entire world. The Ruhr is the basis of German industry; therefore, without the Ruhr, Germany cannot be strong. When you realize that since 1870, or three times within the memory of the oldest living Frenchmen, France has been invaded successfully by a powerful Germany, you can have little doubt why France is so insistent in its demands."

Mr. London admits that France is swinging to the left politically. However, he does not believe that she will become a communist state because "the French are the most individualistic people in the world." Instead, the trend is toward socialism as it is throughout the rest of Europe.

My final question for Mr. London was, "Do you believe that democracy will succeed in France?"

"If democracy does not succeed in France, it can succeed nowhere else in Europe," this proud Frenchman replied. "That is one of the reasons we are determined to make the Fourth Republic of France a success."

— BETTY KOSDON, Proviso Township High School, Maywood  
Florence Otis, teacher

## MY HERITAGE

Many times I have heard my grandfather on my father's side of the family talk about the days when he was a boy in Ireland. He was born in Cookstown, Northern Ireland, on June 8, 1872, the son of a family of very modest means, though not to be called "Shanty-Irish." The family consisted of four brothers, William, Dan, Thomas (my grandfather), and James Collins, and the large buxom, stern mother, an Irish woman formerly named Mary Quinn, and the small-built father Collins, a man of Scottish descent.

My grandfather recalls how, in the early days of his youth, he went out in the fields of neighbors and planted potatoes all day long, earning only a few cents. This money he contributed to the expenses of the family.

With a twinkle in his eye, he tells how the children had but one pair of shoes; these they carried with them to church on Sunday, and put on before entering the church. After church, they removed their shoes and carried them home.

The family house was small and crowded. Some of the people's roofs were made partially of straw and slanted downward so the moisture would not soak in. The family kitchen consisted of a huge fireplace, where hung an iron kettle and where all the food was cooked, and a big round table where everyone ate. One of the chief foods was potatoes, which were supplemented with tea, soup, or vegetables. The tiniest potatoes were oftentimes cooked to feed to the pigs.

When my grandfather was about seventeen years of age, he left Ireland and went into England, where he stayed for a year, working in the coal mines in the daytime and going to night school at night. He got an education parallel to that of a sixth or seventh grader of today, although his course of study was more varied.

In 1890, he came to the United States, settled in the Middle West and became a naturalized citizen. He farmed and raised horses when they were in great demand. Today, he is still farming, and at one time was fairly prosperous, but much of his wealth was destroyed in the disastrous aftermath of World War I.

The thing for which I admire my grandfather is the knowledge he has obtained from his life. Part of it comes from books, but much more comes out of his experiences with everyday living. He does not count money as the main thing in life, although he is thorough and a bit shrewd in his business dealings. He has a heart of gold, and believes in giving freely to others. He has a great love for things of beauty, especially music and well-known poetry. He sometimes sits for two or three hours in the evenings and entertains my grandmother or other members of the family with verse after verse of poetry which he learned back in Ireland. He has no book to which he refers; all of it comes out of his vast and never fading memory. He believes that the wasting of time is a great evil; that one should never be idle, but should constantly be doing something with which to improve his mind and abilities. He doesn't believe in nonsensical things, though he is a great one to tease and joke. He has learned to understand and tolerate his fellow men.

His is a knowledge seldom gained except by actual experience in living, and is usually realized after one has lived for a great number of years.

His experiences, learnings, and teachings are my heritage. I would that I might always remember them and prosper from them.

—BARBARA COLLINS, Rantoul High School  
Nan Fuller, teacher



## BORDERLINE FANCY

An eerie book is *The House of the Seven Gables*. Nathaniel Hawthorne never commits himself; the fancy is purely borderline. Old women have the queerest stories, purely legend, of course! Hawthorne just got his information from these unfounded old wives' tales — or can wizards cast curses?

On the wall of the Pyncheon house hangs a portrait, a really vital portrait, of the first Pyncheon of the gabled house. This is just an ordinary painting. Maybe the man in the picture does follow you around with his sharp eyes; maybe he does frown down upon his posterity when they don't do as he wishes, but it is just the characters' imagination — or is it?

Then on certain occasions the melancholy music of the dead Alice's harpsichord floats through the air — or seems to. It is probably just the wind in some part of the creaky, ancient house — or is it?

All the Pyncheon ghosts promenade through the house on a stormy midnight. It is just the racket made by the storm — of course! No one really believes in ghosts. These apparitions are just tricks of the shadows — or are they?

Shadows, too, are the cause of the faces in Maule's well in the garden of the house of the seven gables. The feeble Clifford may see friendly and accursed faces in the water, but isn't it only the shadows or the pebbles on the bottom?

In every chapter of this exotic book there is borderline fancy. I have never before been so enthralled with a book: it kept me guessing. I was never certain there were ghosts, but I would never linger in those dark and shadowy halls as the clock struck midnight — would you?

— DONNA CAMPBELL, University High School, Normal  
Ruth Stroud, teacher

## THOUGHTS

My thoughts, like new-born colts,  
Step haltingly in meadows of my mind.  
They wobble, sprawl ridiculously,  
But rise again,  
Then quaver o'er a shifted course  
To seek the same goal as before.

— DOROTHY BRODIE  
Lyons Township High School, LaGrange  
Dorles Parshall, teacher

## ART AND CO.

There lived a knight in days of old,  
 So handsome, daring, brave, and bold;  
 A king divine, it has been told —  
 According to Miss Jordan.

His jeweled sword shone bright as fire,  
 With which he won his battles dire;  
 His strong right arm seemed ne'er to tire —  
 According to Miss Jordan.

His twelve staunch knights as brave as he  
 Did cause the foe to turn and flee;  
 At Table Round they made much glee —  
 According to Miss Jordan.

Oh we must suffer many days,  
 With Arthur, Guinie, Lance, and Bleys;  
 But to skip your lesson never pays —  
 According to Miss Jordan.

— BOB MILNER

Lyons Township High School, LaGrange  
 Norma Jordan, teacher

## WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?

Detectives in whodunits  
 Come in in chapter two,  
 Make cryptic cracks at the police,  
 And after that, they're through.

They spend the next few chapters  
 In studying Ming vase,  
 Or pottery, or operas,  
 Or books — but not the case.

And not until the flatfoots  
 Arrest some passer-by  
 Will our hero condescend to tell  
 Just who's the guilty guy.

— ELIZABETH FORSTER

Lyons Township High School, LaGrange  
 Dorles Parshall, teacher

## PORTRAIT OF A MINUTE

Our team is red hot! Our team is red hot! Cheerleaders, flushed and breathless, kneel on the floor, hands upraised, asking the gods to favor them; then they bow down while the frenzied crowd chants rhythmically.

Five players rejoice at their luck, hugging and congratulating each other as fellow team members and fans implore them to win! win! win! Smiling and happy, they wipe their sweaty faces.

The visiting team is strangely silent and bewildered in the uproar. Their pale, worried faces acknowledge the situation. The victory, almost in their eager grasp, has been snatched away by a fighting opponent. In quiet, terse terms, they plan new tactics to meet this emergency.

The coaches sit quietly while the gym is filled with a bedlam of yelling and clapping. Calmly, they plot the odds.

Brrp! Brrp! The hoarse voice of the horn calls the teams to the jump. Quiet falls for a second; the ball is in the air. The crowd sits tensely as the clock begins ticking off the three-minute overtime.

—JOYCE STAUTHAMMER, Pekin High School  
Bernice Falkin, teacher

## GIVE ME THE SMALL TOWN

So you would rather live in a large city than in a small town? All right. I won't try to change your mind; I'll simply tell you why I don't care a whit for your metropolises. Big town people are always in such a terrific hurry, scurrying everywhere with a sort of grim, determined frown on their faces. Small town folk just amble along, getting there on time, accomplishing as much, but in an unrushed, friendly manner. In the noisy streets of a large city, thundering trains cut the sooty air over head and under foot, newsboys scream, autos blare, and tired men and women in the pressing crowds almost never speak, except to growl a hurried, impolite, "'Scuse me!" But rest a spell with me in the small town general store, warm yourself by the pot-bellied stove, help yourself to an apple, and settle back for a cheery visit with some of the "boys." No loud and crashing noises here, except for the occasional crackling of the pine log in the fire. It's a cozy lullaby to lull you to slumber in your old slouch chair. No sir, mister, give — me the — small — town — a-n-y zzzzzzzz.

—DICK STOLLEY, Pekin High School  
Bernice Falkin, teacher



## PIANO RECITAL

"Are you relaxed, dear?" asked Miss Adams when she had given us her usual little pep talk and patted each of us confidently on the shoulder.

"Of course. I feel fine," I said. "Scared to death" was really more like it. For, although I had played frequently for company and at various small gatherings, the prospect of our June piano recital always brought the same cold stab of fear. I glanced at my sister, sitting a few chairs away from me. Her turn to play was before mine, but she showed no signs of uneasiness. Her plump legs were swinging back and forth, and her face was wreathed in happy smiles.

"All right, I believe we can begin now," said Miss Adams as if it were going to be like opening Christmas presents. Miss Adams was a tall thin woman whose dresses seemed still to be on hangers and who always smelled faintly of lavender. I resigned myself to waiting my turn to play, and tried to attain a more comfortable position on my creaky folding chair.

At last it was time for Phyllis, my sister, to play. She walked down the aisle, her thick braids bouncing on her pink organdy back like children jumping on a feather bed. Miss Adams and Phyllis were to play a duo. How different they looked seated at the two pianos. Miss Adams was sitting bolt upright, her long, thin, strong fingers seeming to pull the music from the piano keys. Phyllis perched on the bench with her short legs barely reaching the pedals and her stubby fingers tapping out her piece.

Only one more girl, then I would be on that bench before all these people! The soft June breeze blew the smell of the flowers across the room and made the venetian blinds bump rhythmically on the window ledges. Applause sounded. Oh, now it was my turn! I rose to my feet, and it seemed as if someone else's feet carried me down the aisle past the shining sea of faces. At last I was seated at the piano. My arms seemed to have lost all life, and my fingers felt like useless sticks. By superhuman effort I raised my hands to the keys, which seemed so very close together. I looked across the top of the piano to my mother. Her face was anxious, and I knew that she was more concerned even than I. I had memorized my pieces well; so they seemed to play themselves without any effort on my part.

How really simple it seems now that it is over! As Mother says, the worst part of anything is the waiting. I am beginning to realize more and more that it is the beginning of wisdom and maturity of soul to banish gnawing fear from one's heart.

— JANICE MACDOUGALL, West Rockford High School  
Lois Dille, teacher

## MORNING RIDE

Fog slowly drifted in from the river and across the path. It was cool and damp that morning, good weather for horseback riding. Spring had just about arrived, and there was a sharpness in the air that spelled excitement. You couldn't blame man or beast for wanting to run that morning; so I couldn't feel too badly toward Smoky. He was just a full-blooded horse who was feeling like a colt again.

The stableman had warned me about Smoky. He was the fastest and best-trained horse on the grounds, but he had too much independence to be safe for beginners. Still I was already quite a proven horsewoman at those stables; so they sent me off with a pat on the back and an assurance that I could handle that horse as well as his trainer. Off we went through the low, drooping boughs that formed a canopy over our heads. It was a perfect morning for a run.

"Come on, boy," I said, "let's make this good."

We started out at a fast trot. Before I knew it, we were doing a faster canter. And that's how it started. There was nothing I could do to stop him. I was galloping along the path at break-neck speed on a horse that wouldn't take "no" for an answer. All I could do was to hold tight and pray.

After the first sensations of fear, I began to enjoy myself. Leaves brushed past my face and neck, beating a rhythmic tattoo on my leather jacket. We seemed to be racing the wind itself!

The horse pounded on with what seemed to be ceaseless energy. Then beads of sweat began to appear on his sleek sides, and the realization came that he would run himself to the point of exhaustion if something wasn't done. Taking a firmer grip on the reins, I pulled back with all of my might. The muscles of his neck pulled against me to the tautness of a rubber band. I could see them straining through his dark hide until it seemed they would snap with the pressure, but still he plowed forward with that deathless determination. We both knew something must weaken soon; would it be he or I? It was nip and tuck for many moments, but then, with one last snort of defeat, he gave in and slowed to a trot. Exalted with my power, I coaxed him down to a walk, and after a short rest we started back.

As the stable came in sight, Smoky broke into a light trot again and entered in his best style. The stableman came up to us beaming.

"Why, he looks as fresh as a daisy!" he exclaimed. "I told you he wouldn't give you a bit of trouble."

— CAROLYN KALAL, J. Sterling Morton High School, Cicero  
Grace Robinson, teacher

## THE STORM

The clouds blot out the light of dying day,  
And fill the air with an oppressive heat.  
The thunder rolls across the dark'ning sky;  
The wind makes whistling sounds among the leaves;  
The lightning flashes bright and disappears  
Before the eye can catch its jagged streak.

And then the rushing sound of coming rain  
That sweeps the hillside and the neighbor's lawn,  
And draws a curtain, colorless and clean,  
Across the old familiar homes and trees.  
A thousand tiny hammers beating tunes  
Of endless strain upon the window glass,  
And gurgling water bubbling through the eaves  
As if a brook by magic had begun  
To flow from out the chimney down the roof.

Then suddenly the hammers cease to beat,  
And in the eaves the brooklet stops its song,  
And all is clear and bright and shining clean;  
And soon the stars come out to gaze upon  
The gleaming, smiling earth; and all is still.

— MARY LEHMAN  
Naperville High School  
Dorothy Scroggie, teacher

## A BIRTHDAY GIFT

All day among the crowds, I shopped around,  
Just looking for a birthday gift for you,  
I saw so many lovely things to buy,  
But woman-like, found none of them would do.

A bit of bird-like melody I heard,  
I thought to capture it and hold it there.  
I saw a small white cloud you might have used  
To dust away some worry, fret, or care.

But still I searched for just the finest thing,  
For something not too common nor too rare,  
I came upon a shop by angels kept,  
And bought for you a handmade, heartfelt prayer.

— ADRIANNE FLIGIEL  
Mercy High School, Chicago  
Sister Mary Evelyn, teacher



## CONVERSATIONALISTS

There are several kinds of conversationalists, some of them very obnoxious. Usually you encounter most of them at a party.

First, you meet Mr. Won't-Talk. He sits in a corner with a very bored expression on his face. He answers all your questions and remarks with "Umm," or "Yeah!" Finally, you give up in despair and sit staring at him until he walks away without a word. Then you are joined by Joe Brag.

This individual is no won't-talker. To the contrary, he talks, in a very loud, unpleasant voice, much too much. You are very glad when Mumble-Jumble asks you to dance. Even if he can't dance, you think, he's better than Joe Brag, because he doesn't boast.

But, Mumble-Jumble is equally displeasing. For he mumbles his words in a very indistinct manner. You simply can't understand a word he says. When the dance is over, you are joined by Myra Jump-the-Gun. She is a very tiresome person so you settle yourself resignedly and say, "Myra, what did you think of the—" but you cannot finish because Myra does it for you with "football game? I thought it was pretty good, but it seemed as if the other team was pretty rough."

You change the subject. You say, "If there is one author that I like better than any other, it's Stephen Vincent—"

"Benet," Myra completes for you; "I like him, too."

Much to your satisfaction, you see someone approaching you. It's Hazy Harry. Perhaps he will ask Myra to dance. No, no such luck. He wants to tell you something. "I saw your brother today," he says.

"Oh, where was he?" you ask. "What time was it?"

Harry answers, "It was at two o'clock. No, let me see, it must have been one o'clock, or maybe it was three. No, it was two because I had lunch at one and was home by three. That's when I saw him." By this time you have forgotten the question. You are saved from having to ask again by Gertie Gush. She has seen Harry's new tie.

"Oh, Harry!" she croons, "what a lovely tie! Why it's just perfectly adorable! I have never seen one so darling!" You leave Harry to the tender mercies of Gertie and begin talking to Miss Catherine Courtesy, the chaperon. At last there is someone with whom you can converse sensibly and quietly. You settle yourself comfortably and resolve not to leave Miss Courtesy's side the rest of the evening. You feel that you have met enough of the obnoxious conversationalists to last you indefinitely.

— NINA FOX, Rantoul High School  
Nan Fuller, teacher

## AN OPEN LETTER TO R.C.A. VICTOR

Dear Sirs:

I write to you in the interest of music, in this case, Jazz. Your Sunday program, "Classical vs. Jazz," so distorts the qualities of Jazz, so inhibits true Jazz style, yes, so completely and irrevocably fails to capture the Jazz spirit in so much as one measure, that the program disgraces Jazz and all Jazz signifies before the vast, unseen radio audience.

Your program as it stands, "Classical vs. Jazz," is a pitiful farce. Note the program of Sunday, March 24, which included as Jazz, among other banalities, the current Eddie Cantor ditty, "Onezy Twozy, I Love Youzy," and if I may steal a lick, it stinkzy fourzy or fivezy timezys. At any rate, the manner in which this moldy fig was presented and interpreted was not Jazz, in any form or manner, bar none! Typical performance: an over-lush orchestra with two strings to every horn; the musicians presented of only mediocre quality — with a heavy line under mediocre when aforesaid musicians attempted a so-called Jazz arrangement; the usual non-Jazz type of female vocalist, hired solely for her more obvious qualifications; and an orchestration which included the band as a chorus behind the voices of several guest stars — non-musical guest stars! Example: Frank Morgan vocalizing on "Onezy-Twozy." Could true Jazz be more flagrantly prostituted? I think not! If sponsors and producers believe the radio audience is more interested in this type of Lombardoism with a show-off complex rather than true music for the sake of music alone, let them present their absurd, degrading commercialism, but let them refrain from associating these trivialities with Jazz.

If I'm not being presumptuous, perhaps an adequate definition of Jazz would clarify this situation. Jazz is not the composition but the playing of the composition. "Happiness Is a Thing Called Joe," as sung by Bonnie Baker with Tommy Tucker's Band would be nothing more than a boring version of a fine song, yet a Frances Wayne rendition backed by the Woody Herman herd would be, and is, undoubtedly, a Jazz Classic. Thus we find the musicians are the real creators, certainly not the composer alone. The written note is but a road map, a direction finder, for one must depend upon the ear to appreciate the work fully. Jazz is a spontaneous, intangible something. But it's there. Listen to the Benny Goodman sextet swing, "After You've Gone," the incomparable Duke Ellington Orchestra render "Black and Tan Fantasy," or an ultra-modernistic Stan

Kenton arrangement of his "Artistry Jumps." Jazz is emotion itself, the lament of a negro slave, the gushing laughter of a colored mammy, the droll humor of a sporting-house pianist. Jazz is rhythm, the beat of a congo drum, the tap of a dancer's foot, the pulse of a human heart. Jazz is the primitive cry of a race. It is as complex as life itself, as simple as a rose petal; all this and much more is Jazz.

Thus, as proved above, your program, "Classical vs. Jazz," is in reality classical vs. popular, the inane sentimental tunes that are forced on the public by a small group of all-powerful Tin Pan Alley publishing houses, which dictate the musical taste of the nation.

There are two ways in which you may present your program in a realistic light. Present the same music you now call Jazz, but rename the program "Classical vs. Popular." This type of program, however, would lose its flavor and originality by the deletion of the word Jazz and would certainly fail to capture the potential qualities of "Classical vs. Jazz." The second and more ambitious method would involve hiring a studio orchestra made up of local Jazz-men who played in a similar style, men who had an affinity for each other through the medium of their instruments, and possibly booking special Jazz-bands or combos for guest appearances.

When a Duke Ellington or a Woody Herman, a Coleman Hawkins or a Benny Carter, a Dizzy Gillespie or a Lionel Hampton, a Stan Kenton, a Cootie Williams, a B. G. sextet, a Georgie Auld, an Earl Hines—and on through the list of Jazz greats—plays pure, inspired Jazz, then and then only will the lay public be in any way equipped to judge between Classical and "Classical-Jazz" music (a term I have coined to represent the pure Jazz from the commercial potpourri falsely dubbed Jazz by such programs as yours).

With the addition of a Jazz critic or Jazz personality, such as Charles Edward Smith or Leonard Feather, to introduce the Jazz portion of the program (as does Deems Taylor with the Classical), "Classical vs. Jazz" would be correctly titled and fairly presented. And I am as sure that the living Classic Jazz would triumph in the great majority of cases over the traditional Classical music as I am sure that King Louis can hit C above high C on his golden trumpet.

Jazz will eventually gain its high, rightful place in the realm of creative art, and this day can be hastened by the intelligent foresight of sponsors and producers who have it in their power to present the real Classical-Jazz.

—STANLEY GOSCH, Lyons Township High School  
Dorles Parshall, teacher



## MOONLIGHT

Moonlight . . . .  
Cool yellow, pale green —  
The shade of all my sorrows  
And yet, of all my peace.  
Moonlight . . . .  
Radiant rays, shimmering silver  
You are the champagne of my soul.  
Moonlight . . . .  
Quiet, calm, distant,  
Mocking me in your distance.  
Unattainably far like the mountain  
That is never reached.  
Moonlight . . . .  
Slipping through my fingers,  
Elusive  
As the untouchable quicksilver  
Of my dreams.

— ROSALYN BARANCIK  
Hyde Park High School  
Louise L. Kirby, teacher

## PAGE THREE IN MY MEMORY ALBUM

I have never forgotten the night I found the little dead bird. In fact all that day had been one to remember — from the time we left our house in new red caps and mittens for the train ride through the snowy fields and suburbs, clear up to our arrival at the home of our aunt.

With typical holiday ceremony, my sister and I presented our cousins with their Christmas gifts and received our own. We all exclaimed over the lovely presents — the drums for the cousins, the toy dog for my sister, and the blue cradle for me — and enthusiastically began playing with them. Finally, however, we wore the newness from our toys, and the four of us were bundled into our coats and leggings for a ride in the snow.

After an hour of sledding, we started back to the house. My uncle suggested a short-cut across an old estate which we loved to call "the woods." It was a joy to stretch our legs, and we children ran about playing a game of hide-and-seek. The trees and bushes provided wonderful hiding places, and all the time the snow was sifting down in a veil of mystery. I had drifted further and further away to avoid discovery, and then I saw the little dead bird.

I knelt down to look more closely and spoke to it, hoping somehow or other to bring it to life again, but no spark showed in the filmy eyes. Finding my murmured words of no avail, I picked up the limp gray feathers.

Suddenly I realized that I could no longer hear voices; on all sides were only barren trees and white-trackless snow. The sky above was an icy blue, and the stars seemed to be hard and many faceted diamonds. I got to my trembling knees, and tears gathered in my eyes as I looked into the menacing shadows. Was this the path? I couldn't be sure. On and on it wound among the trees.

Then suddenly, before I really cried, I lifted my eyes to an unforgettable sight. The house on the old estate was surrounded by a high fence, and the big gate just ahead was standing ajar. The moonlight shining down upon the place made it seem like a vision, like a lovely blue and silver Christmas card.

For a few minutes that night I knew what it was like to be mature in heart and mind.

Meanwhile rounding up their flock at home, my father and uncle realized that I was no longer with them. They retraced their steps and followed the many tiny ones that marked our game of hide-and-seek until they recognized the erring steps that led off in a straight line.

I remember well that there was no reprimand when they found me. I also recall their understanding as they looked down at the lifeless bird in my hand. They knew that I had met both death and beauty that night.

— RITA DUSATKO, J. Sterling Morton High School, Cicero  
H. G. Todd, teacher

### FROM NOWHERE

How many times I have told myself  
That they've gone—the hurt, the pain, and the tears,  
And I love him no more.  
But then, from nowhere  
Drifts a love song,  
Reshaping the harsh light and rasping voices  
Into dusky candle-glow and the music  
Of a thousand whispering winds.  
And from the dark inside me,  
A hand reaches up to twist again  
My knotted heart, and I know  
I love him still.

— ROSALYN BARANCIK  
Hyde Park High School  
Louise L. Kirby, teacher

## GLADNESS

I've only seen:  
Snow that falls gray and dim  
On city streets,  
And huge dark monsters marring  
White landscapes,  
And smoky shadows  
On cold blue skies;  
And yet I know:  
That snow lies white and soft  
On myriad fields,  
That hills are lofty kings  
Of splendor,  
That glistening tree tops  
Touch starry skies,  
And I am glad.

— MARION DWYER

Mercy High School, Chicago  
Sister Mary Evelyn, teacher

## REMEMBER TO LOVE ME

Go where you will and do as you will,  
Stay equal or climb high above me;  
Be gay as a parrot or still as a hill  
Only — remember to love me.

Wear what you will in no matter what style,  
Be either the flame or the ember,  
As blue as a storm cloud or sweet as a smile,  
Only — remember, remember.

Follow your heart at whatever the cost,  
Stay equal or climb high above me;  
Be bright as April or frigid as frost,  
Only — remember to love me.

— TILLIE WEBBER

Bismarck Township High School  
Mary G. Messner, teacher